



# Handbook 2019–2020

Mrs. Janie Benjamin  
Choral & Handbell Director

## WHY SING IN A CHOIR?

Choir Members and Parents:

It is with much excitement that I welcome you to the Hazelwood Middle School Choral Department. This year is going to be filled with many exciting opportunities for you and your children. I would like to share a few thoughts about the importance of choir in the life of your middle school child.

I believe that every child can learn, and I extend that belief that every child is musically expressive and deserves the opportunity to explore that capability. Our choral program at Hazelwood offers a non-auditioned choral experience for the hesitant music learner and beginner, as well as offers challenges for the highly skilled or gifted choral musician.

Throughout the year, we will learn about the individual singer by developing vocal skills, increasing knowledge of his/her own voice, developing music literacy and providing opportunities to develop the voice. In addition, we will learn about the choral ensemble and how we can work together to build an organization that we can be proud to be a part.

Why is it important for students to be in choir? Choral music can:

- Provide a unique way of thinking
- Act as a link between the past and present
- Lift the self-esteem of participants
- Bring joy to both the singer and the audience
- Provide a means of expressing thoughts, values and emotions through singing that otherwise maybe difficult to express through words.

I am so excited to get this year started. It is going to be a great year of learning and singing together. I look forward to working with each of you as we make this year at Hazelwood the best one yet! Thank you for allowing me to share my love of music with your child.

Sincerely,

Janie Benjamin, Choral Director  
[jbenjamin@nafcs.k12.in.us](mailto:jbenjamin@nafcs.k12.in.us)

## Be the Best You Can Be!

We are all here because we have something in common; we enjoy singing. How we sound as a group has a lot to do with how we work together. If you will follow the class procedures listed below every day of the year, the result will be a choral group that truly makes beautiful music. The success of our group rests upon your individual self-discipline. *Singing in harmony can only be accomplished by working in harmony.*

- Students are to be in the classroom when the bell rings. Upon entering the choir room for rehearsal, you are to pick up your folder and be seated quietly in your assigned seat within 30 seconds of the bell.
- Students are expected to have a pencil every day. Marks in the music are to be made in pencil only.
- Gum, candy, food and drink are not permitted in the choir room. When we have gum, candy, or food in our mouths, our tonal production and diction are affected. Daily participation points will be deducted as well as other discipline actions may be taken. The only exception to this rule is bottled water. There is a water fountain in the choir room for students to fill water bottles.
- Students are *expected* to demonstrate good posture for singing during rehearsal.
- Talking during a rehearsal will not be tolerated. Rehearse in a professional manner and we will have a professional sound.
- Sometimes in the course of rehearsal, only one section will be singing. The members of the sections not singing at the time should be carefully following the musical part that is being rehearsed so that the total knowledge of the song is achieved.
- Music is to not be taken from the choir room. Music is to be placed in the folder provided and placed in the designated cabinet in the choir room. Music is to be handled with care. Any music that is destroyed or lost it will be the responsibility of the student to which it is assigned to replace.
- Please exhibit common courtesy toward others at all times. Treat others as you would want them to treat you. Students are expected to exhibit their best behavior and rehearsal skills when a guest is in the classroom. This includes substitutes, student teachers, guest directors, and visiting students.
- Restroom passes will only be given in an extreme emergency. Please take care of everything before you come to class.
- Respect Others, Respect Space & Respect Yourself.

## Grading

“Major” Category* 60% of your grade		
Performance Skills	Written Theory Skills (includes Vocabulary)	Listening Skills
Intonation	Staff, Notes & Pitches	Interval Recognition
Rhythm	Note Values, Time Signatures & Rests	Correct Notation
Sight-Reading	Time Signatures, Ties & Slurs	Rhythm & Notes
Diction/Articulation	Repeats, Eighth Notes & Dotted Quarter Notes	Rhythm
Stage Presence	Dynamics, Tempo Marks, Articulation, D.C. & D.S.	Scale Recognition
Singing Technique such as attacks & releases, musical skills	Flats, Sharps, Naturals, Whole & Half Steps	Intervals
Interpretation & Musicianship	Intervals & Solfege	
	Scales & Key Signatures	
	Key Signatures, Chromatics & Intervals	

\*included, but not limited to

“Minor” Category 40% of your grade
Rehearsal Skills
Having required materials
Demonstrating Cooperation, Effort & Positive Attitude
Following Directions

## Performance Attendance

### Performance Attendance

- As a performing organization, we work constantly to be prepared to perform. Every member of the ensemble plays a vital role in the success of the entire organization. Unless otherwise noted on the Calendar, ALL performances are required.

For these reasons, the following policies regarding performance attendance apply:

- All performances on the schedule at the beginning of the semester, as well as those with at least three weeks' notice, are **required** performances. Should you have a conflict that cannot be resolved, please notify Mrs. Benjamin **at least 5 days ahead of time in writing.**
- In an emergency situation, parents should call the choral department office at 812-542-8502, ext. 3331, and leave a message explaining the situation as soon as possible.
- Excused absences include personal illness, death in the family, or an emergency over which the student has no control. If an absence is excused, it is the **student's responsibility** to get a make-up assignment from Mrs. Benjamin. If an absence is unexcused, the student will not be given the privilege of making up the points lost due to the absence.

### NAFCS Policies Regarding Student Activity Conflicts

- Although we try our best to avoid scheduling performances at the same time as other school related events, occasionally conflicts do arise which cannot be remedied. The following policies govern these situations in all NAFCS/HMS activities and was approved by the school board of NAFCS:

When a practice or rehearsal and an event (game, contest, and concert) are scheduled simultaneously, the **MUSICAL EVENT** takes precedent. For example, if someone has dance team practice, or Basketball practice on the night of a concert, they are required to come to the concert and not go to their practice.

## Performance Attire

As a member of the HMS Choral program, you will be *expected to wear the performance uniform* for all performances unless otherwise indicated. Performance uniforms are the same for both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade choirs. *Students in the Concert Choir will wear choir robes (provided).*

### 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Choirs

- CHOIR SHIRT (Order from Mrs. Benjamin)
- Denim Jeans
- Clean Tennis Shoes / Sneakers
- Flip-flops / Slides are not acceptable footwear

Choir Shirts (\$10 each) can be ordered from Mrs. Benjamin  
*(Order form is attached)*

*If for some reason there is a financial problem with purchasing a shirt please contact Mrs. Benjamin and she will make arrangements on a case to case basis.*

## Communication

*HMS Choir website* - On this website you may get concert schedules, handbooks, forms, pictures, videos, practice tracks to music and pdf's of sections of music that relate to the choral program. The web address for the website is:

<http://hmschoirs.weebly.com/>



Please sign up to receive reminders about concerts, due dates, etc.  
*(Information is attached.)*

**Students and parents read, sign and return this page**  
**DUE: on or before August 16, 2019**

This handbook was written for all Hazelwood Choral Ensemble members and their families. After reading the handbook, please fill in this page, and return it to Mrs. Benjamin on or before August 16, 2019. This will count as a grade.

Your signature below acknowledges:

- You have read the HMS Choir Handbook
- You understand the requirements for your/your child's expected participation in the HMS Choral Program for the 2019-2020 school year.
- You are aware of scheduled performance dates for the year and acknowledge that performance attendance is REQUIRED.

Parent Name (PRINT)	Parent Signature	Date
Student Name (PRINT)	Student Signature	Date